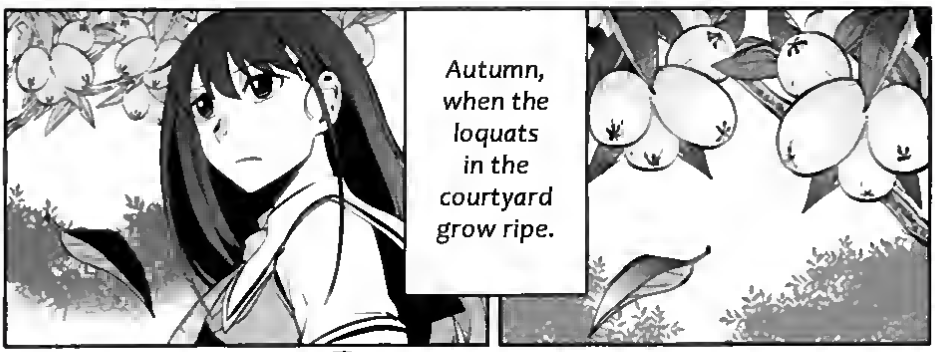
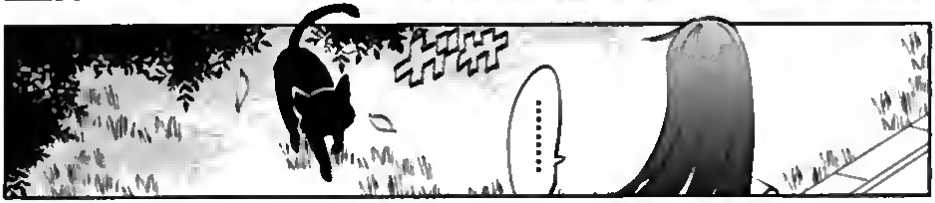

Autumn, when the loquats in the courtyard grow ripe.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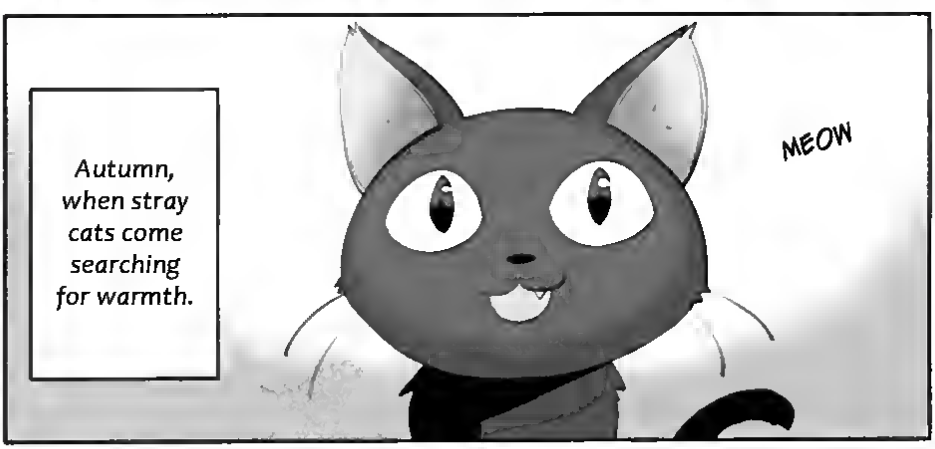

Autumn, when stray cats come searching for warmth.
MEOW

ゴゴゴ
ガサ
ガサ
Gya!
ガコ
That was close!
.....

So this is where you were, Sakaki-san.
If it's under construction,
they really should put up a sign or something.
Can I help you?
Yes.
It's about our new transfer student...

Chapter 4: A Cat With No Home

IRIS LOGISTICS
How stupid are you!?
That truck is the new transfer student!?
That...
IRIS LOGISTICS
She must have an amazing amount of luggage, to have to bring an Isuzu Motors Electronically-Controlled Stepless Variable Displacement Turbo truck like that.
Anyway...

ゴゥ
ゴゥ

'M Irisu Makina...
Nice'ta mee'you...

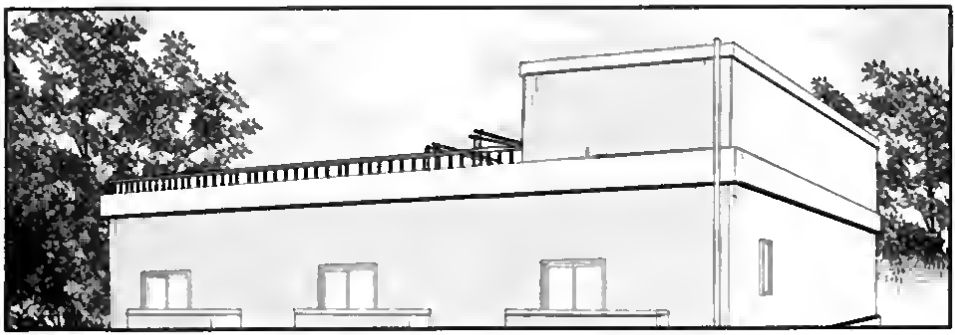
Mwaah!
Grrrw!
By any chance, would you like
something to eat?
Michiru!
Aun...
"I'unno y'know"!?
.....
I'unno, y'know.

.....
Oh come on! I can't even say anything!?
Don't you think she could just be faking it?
Irisu Makina...
She's the same as all of us.
With nowhere else to go, she was locked into this birdcage all alone...

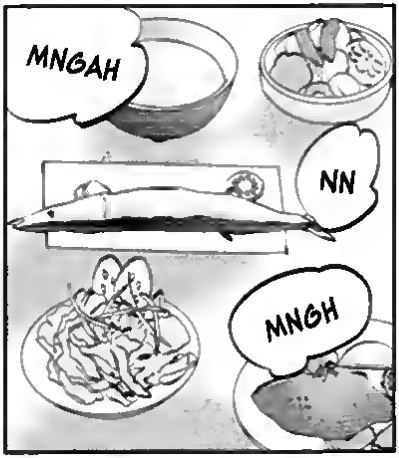
It couldn't be...
Irisu Makina
Irisu?
The East Beach Group may have achieved considerable influence in the Kanto area by focusing on private railway business.
Yes, the eldest daughter of that very Irisu clan is transferring here.
but Irisu is a name with nation-wide influence, traded on the stock market and well-known in the financial world.

Yes.
If I recall, she was involved in a kidnapping...
In addition, since the Irisu family is currently caught up in the chaos of a war of succession, very few people have been trusted with the knowledge of her presence in this school.
And as a result of that incident, her communication skills have been substantially impaired.
That sounds just like *him*.
Trying to gain favor with the Irisu by providing a safe haven for their daughter...

Still, Sakaki-san...
I understand. I'll be discreet.
I would sincerely appreciate it if you could keep the chaos of her family circumstances confidential from the other two.
I suspect you may be able to relate to this girl, in some way.
A difficult past, and battles over inheritance...



AAH


MNGAH
NN
MNGH

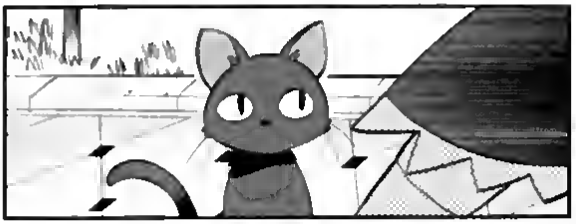
It *is* a bit shocking... Irisu-san, do you have any particular likes or dislikes?
But, the only thing she's eating is fruit...
You can tell from the quality that Amane was raised in a restaurant...

'M partial to...
Some degree
Zzz...

F'ya hit me with that jack, yer gonna regret it...
Gran'pa ...
I guess..?
That's her sleep-talking?
'Specially the yellow n'the blue...
Oh god, this chalk... It looks good enough to eat...
ビク
You can't eat the chalk! Believe me, I already tried it!

[BEZALD]

You want some o' this!? You pickin' a fight with Makina!?
Hey, asshole ...I Don't gimme that defiant look!



... MEOW?

Her speech and conduct are all over the place...
She's emotionally unstable...
I just can't take my eyes off her...
She goes wherever her curiosity takes her, like a little child.
I simply can't get a reading on her at all.
But, acting as unstable as she is? That couldn't be all there is to it...
Well, everyone puts up a bit of a façade when they're suddenly thrust into a new environment.
You *sure* she's not just faking it?
.....

I'm...
hungry, y'know.
Grrrrrwl

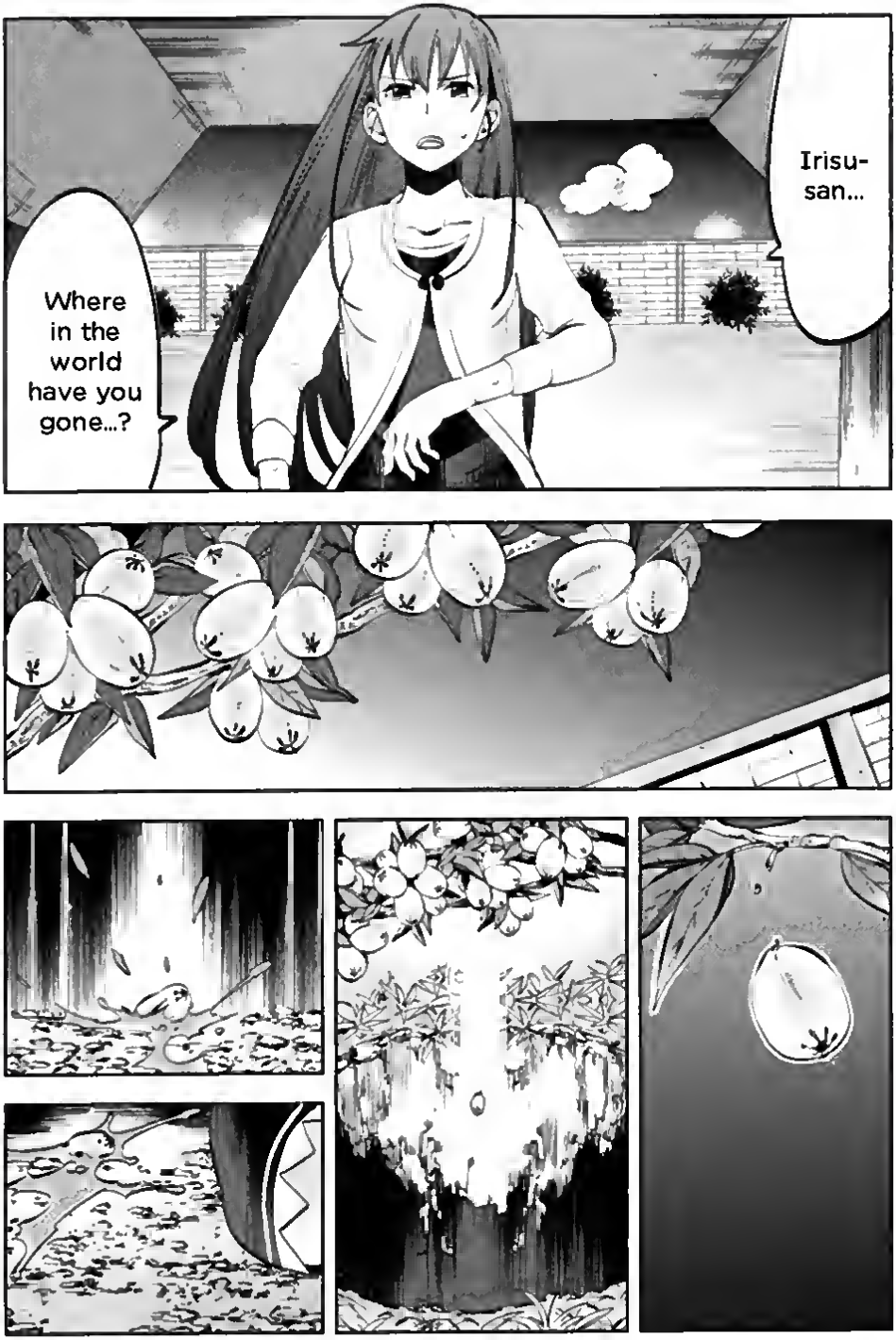
By any chance, would you like something to eat?
.....

Maybe it's just too much for her here?
Don't you think that's taking it a bit too far?
No.
... If there were somewhere else for her to go, she might be better off that way.
Grrrwl
Sakaki-san, you too?
.....
If you consider the current situation, Matsu-shima-san has a point.

Nevertheless, that's not a suggestion we can approach her with, at the moment..
At least until Irisu-san is able to express her own desires clearly, there's nothing we can do but wait.
How about I try taking care of her?
.....
She would be
a heavy responsibility.

Irisu-sa~n!
That's fine. I mean, neither of you are gonna be able to handle it, right?
So, from now on, I'll be taking her under my care.
she was listening ...!?
Don't tell me

Where are you?
Irisu-sa~n!


Irisu-san...
Where in the world have you gone...?

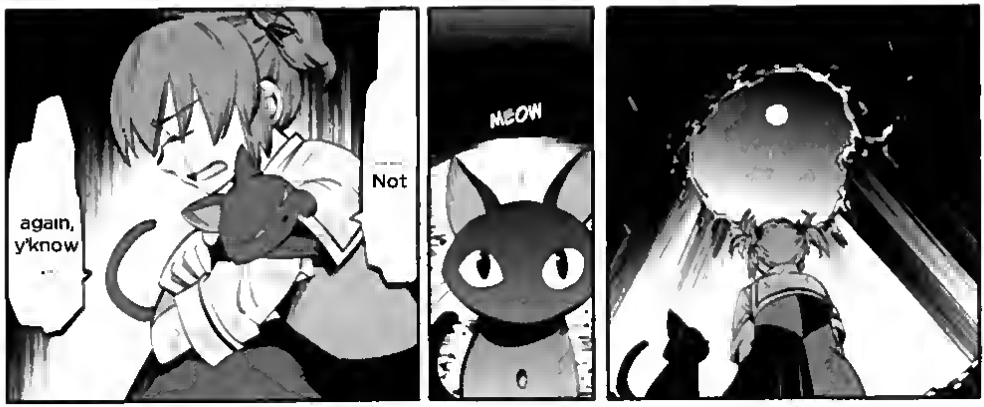
Not even close, y'know...
Can't reach...
Grrww!

Maybe...
I'm gonna...
die down here...?
ワキ
I was just hungry...
That's all.

Just like Daddy...
ガリ
No one'll find me...
I'll die here, starving and all alone...

I can't ...
The suf-fering ...
The hunger ...
The pain...
No...
Just like back then...

I CAN'T TAKE IT AGAIN!!


again, y'know ...
Not
MEOW

She wasn't around the school buildings.
I didn't find her out on the grounds, either.
And it looks like she's not in the dorms. Couldn't she have gone outside the school?

In that case, the situation might be out of our control.
If only we had some sort of lead...

Out-side...

Let's try searching a bit more.
Just like us, she has nowhere else to go.
This is the only place she has...
I don't think she would have left the school.

Hmm, the only impression I ever got from her was how she was always hungry...
Grrw!
You're right... You've got a point there.
Is there anywhere she'd be likely to go...?
GRRWL
IRISU-SAN!?

Sorry, that was me!
Even tsunderes get hungry, you know!
That's pretty misleading conduct for a tsundere!
... Quiet!
IT WASN'T ME THAT TIME!
Not again!
GRRRWL
.....

... It couldn't be!
ガサ
MEOW
IRISU -SAN!?

!?
Are you okay!?
Don't worry, we'll get you out of there right away!!
Sakaki-san, give me a hand.
There's no telling what Michiru might do if I ask her.
WHAT'S THAT SUP-POSED TO MEAN!?
Waa...
Uwaa
I can't reach.

Come on!
ガシ
Irisu-san!
Your hand!
I'm just...
a child nobody wants...
.....

STOP ACTING SO SPOI-LED!
If you don't...
You can't hide behind that excuse forever! Someday, you'll have to show us your true self!
Sakaki-san...!
We won't... We won't know how to face you eye to eye!

I'll be glad to take you under my wing, and raise you right!
And if you don't know what to do from now on,
That's right!
It's not like I'm just gonna sit around and not help, got it!?
M-me too!

You've got no choice but to stay here.

You really ...
want me here...?

Hurry up!
Come on!

SO COME, AND LIVE, WITH US!!

AAA
AAA
AAH!!
UWA
AAA
AAH!

Suou Amane declared:
After that,
as she stood before the girl, Irisu Makina, whom she had just saved,
I'm going to raise this girl as my own.
with renewed conviction.
The object of this impassioned resolution accepted it without complaint.

Gimme some food, y'know!
Ama-nee!

.....
Just hold on a bit~♪
Yeah, yeah.

I thought I told you to call me "Michiru-sama"!
Chiru-chiru,
Yer bottle-blonde hair is startin' to show some black roots, y'know.
... Perhaps she really was faking it all along...
She seems to have changed quite a bit.
AH HA HA HA HA!!

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